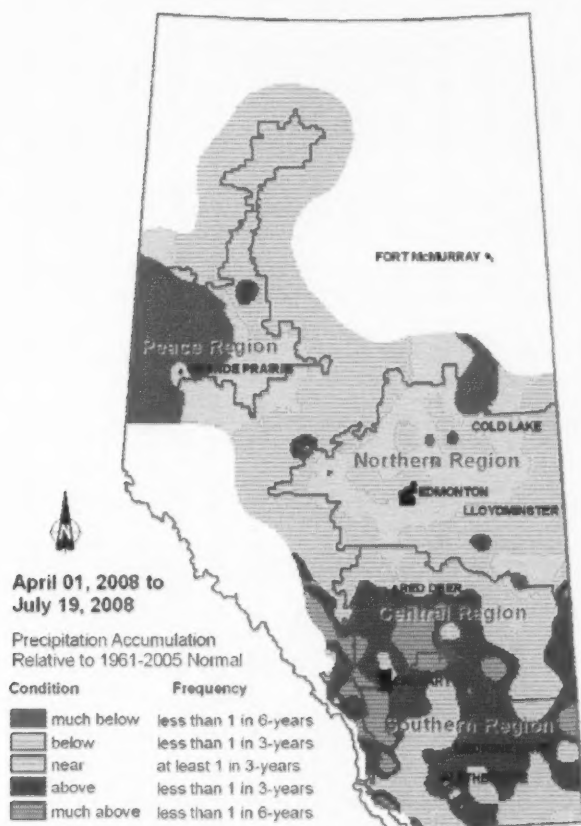


Crop Conditions as of July 17, 2008

Crops are mostly in good to excellent condition across the province. The exception is the Peace Region where crops have deteriorated due to a lack of moisture. Provincially, spring wheat is rated as nine per cent poor, 23 per cent fair, 54 per cent good and 14 per cent excellent, with similar crop conditions for barley and oats. Canola is reported as ten per cent poor, 26 per cent fair, 53 per cent good and 11 per cent excellent. The field pea crop is rated as eight per cent poor, 21 per cent fair, 57 per cent good and 14 per cent excellent. Crop conditions are a major concern in the Peace Region, with spring wheat and canola crops rated as 31 per cent poor and 40 per cent fair. In the Southern and Central Regions, several hailstorms have damaged crops.

Crop development this year continues to be seven to ten days behind normal due to the cool spring weather. Spring cereals are mostly reaching full head emergence while 24 per cent of the canola crop is podding. It is estimated that 31 per cent of dry peas are podding.



Most areas of the province received precipitation over the last two weeks with the exception of the Peace Region. Provincially, surface moisture has improved and is rated as 12 per cent poor, 23 per cent fair, 47 per cent good, 17 per cent excellent and one per cent excessive. The rating of sub-surface moisture is 15 per cent poor, 33 per cent fair, 39 per cent good, 12 per cent excellent and one per cent excessive. The Peace Region remains dry, with 50 per cent of the surface moisture rated as poor.

Pasture conditions in Alberta are rated as 16 per cent poor, 31 per cent fair, 44 per cent good and nine per cent excellent. The first cut haying operations have been progressing slowly over the last two weeks, due to rain showers and thunderstorms. Provincially, haying is estimated at 60 per cent complete on dryland and 75 per cent complete on irrigated land. Additionally, there are regional problems with pest infestations, including wheat midge, grasshoppers, root maggots and gophers.

Our thanks to Alberta Agricultural Fieldmen, staff of AFSC and the Alberta Ag-Info Centre for their partnership and contribution to the Alberta Crop Reporting Program.

REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS:

The 2008 Alberta Crop Report Series continues to provide summaries for the following five regions:

Region One: Southern (Strathmore, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Foremost)

- Several hailstorms have moved through the region, with some areas hit two to three times. Damage levels range from light to severe.
- The surface moisture is rated as 13 per cent fair, 60 per cent good, 25 per cent excellent and two per cent excessive.
- Conditions of spring wheat are reported as two per cent poor, 15 per cent fair, 68 per cent good and 15 per cent excellent. Canola is rated as three per cent poor, 19 per cent fair, 67 per cent good and 11 per cent excellent.
- The majority of spring wheat is near full head emergence and 45 per cent of canola is podding.
- The first cut haying is 58 per cent complete on dryland and 84 per cent complete under irrigation.

Region Two: Central (Rimbey, Airdrie, Coronation, Oyen)

- Several areas have been hit by hailstorms, causing moderate to severe damage. Areas fortunate to miss the hail have benefited from the rain.
- The rating of surface moisture is one per cent poor, 11 per cent fair, 57 per cent good, 29 per cent excellent and two per cent excessive.
- Conditions of spring wheat are reported as three per cent poor, 13 per cent fair, 64 per cent good and 20 per cent excellent. The rating of canola is four per cent poor, 16 per cent fair, 65 per cent good and 15 per cent excellent.
- The majority of spring wheat is in the early head emergence stage, while ten per cent of canola is podding.
- Dryland haying is 61 per cent complete, with the quality reported as 71 per cent good to excellent.

Region Three: North East (Smoky Lake, Vermilion, Camrose, Provost)

- The region has received spotty showers, but could benefit from more rain.
- Spring wheat conditions are reported as five per cent poor, 27 per cent fair, 55 per cent good and 13 per cent excellent. Canola is rated as seven per cent poor, 32 per cent fair, 50 per cent good and 11 per cent excellent.
- The surface moisture is reported as nine per cent poor, 42 per cent fair, 38 per cent good, ten per cent excellent and one per cent excessive.
- The majority of spring wheat is in the early flowering stage and ten per cent of canola is podding.
- Dryland haying is 60 per cent complete, with quality reported as 71 per cent good to excellent.
- Spraying for wheat midge is occurring in some areas. Additionally, grasshoppers, root maggots and gopher infestations are moderate to threshold levels, and are a concern to some producers.

Region Four: North West (Barrhead, Edmonton, Leduc, Drayton Valley, Athabasca)

- Most areas in the region have received some moisture and experienced isolated hailstorms.
- The rating of surface moisture is six per cent poor, 21 per cent fair, 58 per cent good and 15 per cent excellent.
- Conditions of spring wheat are reported as three per cent poor, 22 per cent fair, 56 per cent good and 19 per cent excellent. Canola is rated as six per cent poor, 22 per cent fair, 55 per cent good and 17 per cent excellent.
- The majority of spring wheat has begun to flower, while 42 per cent of canola is podding.
- Dryland haying is 61 per cent complete, with the quality reported as 75 per cent good to excellent.

Region Five: Peace River (Fairview, Falher, Grande Prairie, Valleyview)

- The region remains dry and rain is needed. Overall, surface moisture is rated as 50 per cent poor, 30 per cent fair, 16 per cent good, three per cent excellent and one per cent excessive (surface moisture was 34 per cent poor and 37 per cent fair as of July 3, 2008).
- Crop conditions have deteriorated over the last two weeks. The spring wheat crop is 31 per cent poor, 42 per cent fair, 25 per cent good and two per cent excellent, while canola is 30 per cent poor, 39 per cent fair, 29 per cent good and two per cent excellent.
- Cereal crops are nearing the final stages of head emergence, while 13 per cent of canola is podding.
- Dryland haying is 70 per cent complete, with the quality reported as 61 per cent good to excellent.

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development
Economics and Competitiveness Division
Market and Consumer Analysis Unit
July 22, 2008

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